



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA HONORS NATION'S TOP ENTREPRENEURS DURING SMALL BUSINESS WEEK: MAY 5-11

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration will honor America's top entrepreneurs – and announce the National Small Business Person of the Year for 2002 – during ceremonies in Washington, D.C. marking National Small Business Week.

The celebration in Washington, D.C., to be held May 6-8, culminates a series of events in local communities across the nation to honor state Small Business Persons of the Year in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

The theme for this year's National Small Business Week celebration, "*Small Business: Where America Works*," captures the entrepreneurial spirit of these exceptional small business owners. The SBA celebration, to be held at the Renaissance Washington D.C. Hotel, will feature the award ceremonies and presentations by notable speakers from industry and government on issues of vital interest to the small business community, including Michael Dell, founder and CEO of Dell Computers.

A national *Small Business Person of the Year* and runners-up are selected from among the 53 state winners. The winners represent a diverse cross section of America in terms of gender, ethnicity, background and types of business. The businesses range from pizza parlor to espresso vendors to technology services; from hot tubs to the beauty/day spa industry and from outdoor aluminum furniture to audio visual staging and sales. They are selected on the basis of several criteria, including financial success, staying power, employee growth, innovation and creativity. The winners are also chosen for their involvement in their communities.

Small Business Advocates are also honored. These awards recognize individuals who have distinguished themselves by their advocacy on behalf of minority-owned, women-owned and veteran-owned small businesses. In addition, advocacy awards go to a small business journalist, accounting and financial services representatives who contribute to small business development.

Additional special awards honor the *SBA Young Entrepreneur*, *Small Business Exporter of the Year* and the *SBA Entrepreneurial Success Award* winner. The latter award is presented to a company that has developed into a large business with SBA assistance. The National *SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) Chapter of the Year* will also be honored.

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It is estimated that America's small businesses, which number more than 20 million, provide jobs for over 50 percent of the private work force and generate more than 50 percent of the nation's private economic output – fuel for the strongest economy in the world. Every U.S. president for 39 years, recognizing the importance of small business to the economy, has issued an annual proclamation designating Small Business Week.

For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-U-ASK-SBA or TDD 704-344-6640. Also, visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.

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